

Timely Belief in Jesus' Timely Sacrifice (John 12:27-36)

It was the Passover week and Jesus had been approached by a group of Greek speaking Gentile worshipers. Their request to see Jesus prompted Him to declare that His time had at last arrived, the time for Him to complete His redemptive work (John 12:23). The gathered crowd heard Jesus' response and began to question Jesus about the identity of the Messiah. Jesus described to the crowd the hour of His redemption, the timing of judgment on sin, and the timely opportunity for people to walk in His light. The time to trust in Jesus is now. It makes no sense to put off a decision about Jesus Christ.

The hour of glory—Jesus' death on the cross glorified the Father by fulfilling His redemptive plan (12:27-30).

While it was natural for Jesus, in His humanity, to shrink from the horror of the cross He held to His higher purpose. Jesus would willingly lay down His life for our sins, thereby glorifying the Father.

Jesus revealed that His heart was troubled because the hour of redemption had arrived (12:27).

With His sacrificial death quickly approaching, Jesus said that His heart (literally soul) was deeply troubled. Such internal agitation is understandable. But how should Jesus react to this troubled condition? Should He ask the Father to save Him from that hour, from that horrid death? Jesus' words here anticipate His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane just prior to His arrest. Jesus refused to shirk His redemptive purpose, declaring, "It was for this very reason I came to this hour."

Jesus prayed for the Father to be glorified, and a voice from heaven declared the affirmative answer to this prayer (12:28).

Jesus always fulfilled the will of God the Father (John 5:30; 6:38), and now He prayed that He might glorify the Father's name. Jesus would be glorified in this redemptive work (John 12:23) and His obedience to death would likewise glorify the Father. The Father's "name" refers to God's entire character—His love, grace, mercy, and justice. "Father, glorify your name," Jesus prayed. At that moment a voice from heaven said, "I have glorified it and will glorify it again." The Father had spoken from heaven on two other occasions in Jesus' earthly life—at His baptism (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:21-22) and at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35). Now the Father assured the Son that the redemptive work would result in glory. The Father had previously glorified His name, possibly in the eternal design of this redemptive plan or in the provision for that plan through the sending of His Son into the world. Now the Father would again glorify His name through the fulfillment of that plan.

The crowd heard the voice from heaven but could not discern its origin or content (12:29).

Interestingly, even though the crowd heard the voice from heaven they were unable to discern its message. Some took the voice to be a clap of thunder. Others thought that an angel had spoken to Jesus. Those who are spiritually insensitive will always find it difficult to understand God's revelation and the good news of Jesus Christ.

Jesus stated that the voice from heaven was for the benefit of the people (12:30).

In spite of the fact that the crowd couldn't understand the message of the voice from heaven, Jesus stated that this voice was for their benefit rather than His own. Jesus already knew that the Father would honor His prayer. He was confident that His redemptive work would bring glory to the Father. However, the crowd could benefit from this voice from heaven by recognizing that Jesus had a unique relationship with the Father. They should be able to sense that Jesus came from heaven with a heavenly mission. The hour had come for Jesus to glorify the Father by fulfilling His redemptive plan.

**The hour of judgment—Jesus' death on the cross
defeated sin and Satan's rule over the world (12:31-33).**

The hour of glory would also be an hour of judgment. By redeeming lost humanity, Jesus would necessarily defeat sin and the grip of Satan on this world.

Jesus declared that the time for judgment on the world and its evil ruler had arrived (12:31).

With the little word "now" Jesus declared that the time for judgment had arrived. Wrapped up in the hour of glory—Jesus' redemptive work on the cross—was the hour of judgment. The "world" is, in this context, the anti-God system of unbelief that permeates human hearts and characterizes human existence. Indwelling sin would at last be judged, along with the originator of sin—the "ruler of this world." Jesus considered Satan to possess a usurped authority over this world, but he wielded no such authority over Jesus (John 14:30). Jesus' death would bring about Satan's judgment (John 16:11). Because of the cross, Satan no longer holds authority over human hearts even though he continues to greatly influence human minds and motives (2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-2). Satan is a defeated foe. His ultimate doom has been secured by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ on the cross (Revelation 12:9; 20:1-3, 10). Christians need to be alert to Satan's schemes but we need not fear him or fall under his diabolical influence. Jesus has judged this world and the ruler of this world. We are free through faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus promised that when He would be lifted up from the earth He would draw others to Himself (12:32-33).

In addition to judging sin and Satan, Jesus' death would bring life to those who believe. Jesus stated that He would be "lifted up," indicating the nature of His death (John 3:14-15; 8:28). Crucifixion would involve lifting Jesus' up from the ground on a hideous cross. However, by being lifted up in this way Jesus would "draw all" to Himself. By "all" Jesus didn't imply a universal salvation, since He had already stated that many would be condemned (John 5:28-29).

Instead, Jesus seems to have in mind “all kinds of people”—Jews and Gentiles alike. The Father would draw people to saving faith (John 6:44), and Jesus’ crucifixion would become the basis of that salvation. Jesus would draw people to eternal life through His redemptive work. People from all nations would be attracted to His saving sacrifice (John 10:16; 11:51-52; Revelation 5:9). The cross of Jesus Christ is the focal point of faith and salvation. By His death Jesus defeated sin and Satan and bought salvation for all who believe.

**The hour of light—Jesus’ death on the cross
shines spiritual light into the hearts of those who believe (12:34-36).**

Because the time of Jesus’ death was approaching He warned those in the gathered crowd that they shouldn’t delay their decision about Him. They should follow the light while it was still available to them.

The crowd asked about the identity of the Son of Man and the enduring nature of the Messiah’s reign (12:34).

Obviously Jesus’ audience had widened as He responded to the request of the Greek worshipers. A broader crowd was listening to His words. At this point the crowd asked about the identity of the Messiah, the Son of Man. They understood from the Law that the Messiah would “abide forever.” There would be no end to His reign. Using the term “Law” broadly enough to include the whole Old Testament, the crowd may have been referring to such passages as 2 Samuel 7:16, Psalm 72:17, Isaiah 9:7, and Ezekiel 37:25. Since the Messiah was to have an eternal throne, how could He be “lifted up” in death? “Who is this Son of Man?” they asked. Since Jesus predicted His death, how could He be the Messiah?

Jesus warned the crowd to walk in the light while they had the opportunity, thereby avoiding the dominance of darkness (12:35).

Jesus didn’t deny His impending death. In fact, He warned the crowd that they would have the “light” among them for just a little time longer. Therefore, they should walk in the light while they had the opportunity. Otherwise, darkness would overtake them. Those who walk in darkness, Jesus reminded them, don’t know where they are going. Light and darkness are common themes contrasting the way of Jesus and the way of self and sin. Jesus is the light of the world (John 1:9; 8:12). To reject Jesus is to reject the light. To reject Jesus is to walk aimlessly in the dark. The crowd hadn’t come to accept the reality of Jesus’ divine mission. They didn’t understand that the Messiah had to die for our sins before He would reign forever. So the people needed to follow the light while He was still among them. Soon Jesus would be gone and there would remain only darkness for those who rejected Him.

Jesus invited the crowd to believe in the light while they had the opportunity, thereby becoming sons of the light (12:36).

To walk in the light means to trust in the light, to believe in Jesus. While Jesus was still with them the people needed to believe in Him. In so doing, they would become “sons of light,”

people characterized by the ways of Jesus. Those who reject the light risk the possibility of never returning to the light. Those who refuse to believe in Jesus may not have another opportunity to turn their lives to Him. We must put our faith in Jesus while we have the opportunity. Only then can we receive eternal life and become children of light, people of the truth who shine the love of Jesus into the world. After Jesus placed this challenge before the crowd He went away and hid Himself from them. His hour of redemption was quickly approaching. The hour of glory, of judgment, and light were upon Him. The time to trust in Jesus is now. It makes no sense to put off a decision about Jesus Christ.